

# Species Chair Application



Species Chair position for which you are applying \*

- Dairy Feeder
- Rabbit/Cavy
- Goat
- Dog

Name \*

Robin (Weber) Gildner

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Phone Number \*

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Email Address \*

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3651 Gleaner Hall Rd Unit A Kingsley, MI 49649

County in which you are a registered 4-H volunteer \*

Grand Traverse

Leelanau

Benzie

Kalkaska

Antrim

Describe your experience with 4-H in general and with the 4-H Livestock Council in particular. What other experience do you have with this particular species?

My experience with 4-H began when I was just four years old. I started with entering arts and crafts and quickly moved into showing livestock. Over my 14 years as an active 4-H member I showed a variety of animals which consisted of rabbits, goats, dairy feeders and steers. I am also considered one of the founding members of the pack and draft goat program. This program started with my club and has grown tremendously over the years, it still amazes me that it all began when I was just a child.

My involvement with 4-H of course faded away after I graduated high school. Like most kids, it was off to college and work so there was no time for the fair anymore. I know this sounds corny but I found myself lost the year after I graduated high school. Fair/4-H had been such a big part of my life for so many years that without it, life just felt empty. Well, I couldn't stay away long. A few years later I was approached by a council board member and asked if I would consider running for a specie chair position. I had never considered it but I thought I'd give it a try even though I was terrified. That following year I ran for a specie chair position, I did not get it but it brought me to where I am today. After that meeting I was approached by the newly appointed goat specie chair and was asked if I'd consider running the pack and draft goat portion of the program for her. I am thankful she offered me the opportunity because without that offer I don't believe I would be where I am today.

My experience I have with goat stated when I was just a kid raising a herd four goats for many years. But most recently, in 2018, my husband and I decided to start our own herd of goats. We found that kids in our area were lacking access to quality animals and a breeder that would offer them guidance or help with their project. We started in the fall of 2018 with five ABGA (American Boer Goat Association) registered Boer goats and have since grown to over 70 goats. My family and I are very passionate about goats. We breed and raise show goats. We currently have a herd of over 70 goats which consist of seven different breeds of goats, more if you count the mix breeds. We as a family love to travel across the United States showing goats and promoting the specie.

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Describe how you will actively develop and promote your project area, both during the fair and the rest of the year.

This past year was a special year for me, I not only started my very own 4-H club, mentored countless kids with goats, but I also was able to make my dream of hosting goat clinics for kids a reality. This year I was able to host two completely free clinics for kids to teach them about goats. I am currently planning to host three more clinics for kids and their parents this next year with a potential for a fourth and fifth clinic.

At fair this past year my team and I worked with several kids from over ten different clubs in making sure they were ready on show day. We made sure all the kids and their goats were ready for show, dressed, fitted, and prepared. It was our goal to make sure every kid felt prepared and confident before they entered that ring on show day. I believe that every kid should have the opportunity to do their best and I wanted to make sure they were prepared and ready to do so.

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What specifically do you plan to do to keep up-to-date on your species?

My daily life makes this one easy. Since we breed and raise goats ourselves, I am constantly learning and growing with the specie. We not only natural breed our goats but we also AI and flush breed our goats so staying up to date on the specie, health, nutrition, practices, etc. is important to the overall health of our herd. Raising and showing goats is more than just a hobby for my family and I.

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What do you see as the two most important issues currently facing your species or the 4-H Livestock Council?

Two issues I see currently hindering the growth of the goat program in our area are a lack of knowledge about the specie and support for kids in marketing their projects. To elaborate a little more on this lets talk about goat meat also commonly known as Chevon. Goat is the most eaten meat in the world, we should be helping our kids market their projects as a way to put food in the freezer like we do the other species and not just as a pet. Everyone needs to eat but not everyone needs a pet. One way I would like to suggest that the council help the kids to do this is by offering goat meat as an option during the buyers lunch. I would like to see our buyers lunch offer goat, lamb, pork, and beef as a lunch option. I am fully prepared to help with supplying a goat option for the lunch if this is something the council board would consider.

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What specific ideas do you have for your species' program that you would like to implement during your term in office?

There are several things that I would like to implement during my term if I am elected but to start off, I would like to focus on continuing to help kids with their projects as a whole. If we can get the basics down such as overall health, showing, and fitting I would like to expand the program by looking as what classes or programs the kids want.

The next idea I'd like to focus on would be helping kids learn how to market their goat projects. If kids raise a wether project the ideal way to market their project is as a food source. Goat meat is the healthiest protein, naturally lean, less fat, less saturated fat, and higher in iron compared to beef, pork, lamb, or chicken. Per the USDA the national average on August 12th for goat meat, direct to consumer carcass (whole carcass) was \$9.50 USD/pound. With as generous as our buyers our at our fair I see no reason why our goat kids should not be able to reach the national average if not more per pound. If kids would prefer not to market their animal as a terminal project an alternative would be to market a doe project. A doe could then be marketed as a breed project and although there is the chance it will still be terminal; the odds are much lower if they can provide a quality animal to market to breeders.

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What additional information would you like to provide?

I have been involved with the Northwestern Michigan Fair and 4-H for going on 25 years now. I have been a volunteer assistant with the goat program for the past ten years and I am more than ready to step up and continue to support these kids. Our goal is to provide kids with access to knowledge, support, quality animals, quality feed for proper nutrition, etc. We provided FREE support to kids and their parents all throughout the year and we do not require you to purchase from us in order to receive our support. I will continue to do this whether I'm elected to be the specie chair or not because the light and happiness I see in my own kids' eyes when he's with his goats is all I want for any kid. That is why it is so important to me and why I try so hard to mentor kids and help them find what they're passionate about. Thank you for your time.

In addition to this application, please be prepared to give a 2-3 minute speech at the October meeting of the 4-H Livestock Council. This should include comments regarding your willingness and ability to serve as a 4-H Livestock Council Species Chair, what you feel you can contribute to your particular species' program, and what you feel you can contribute to the 4-H Livestock Council in general.

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